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Official Records

29th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 13 October 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Musambachime (Zambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 11 and 53 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/59/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Motoc (Romania): Since this is the first time since this session's general debate that our delegation is addressing the General Assembly, allow me sincerely to congratulate the President and the members of the Bureau on their election and to convey to the President the assurances of the Romanian delegation's full support in his endeavours. I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the dedicated efforts of the President of the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, Mr. Julian Hunte, particularly those meant to provide new impetus to the process of revitalizing the role of the General Assembly and reforming the Security Council.

I will not touch upon issues related to the Council's annual report to the General Assembly (A/59/2), which was so ably presented by Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the Council President for the month of October. My intervention will focus on a few points drawn from our current experience in dealing with Security Council business.

We fully agree with the views expressed by both the Secretary-General and the majority of delegations regarding the urgent need for comprehensive reform of the United Nations system, including that of the Security Council. In this respect, Romania is looking forward to the recommendations that are to be provided in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change appointed by the Secretary-General, and we will support efforts to build political consensus to consider 2005 as the year to take decisive steps towards the reform of the Organization.

Our delegation shares the mainstream ideas regarding reform of the Security Council, such as the need for the Council to adjust to new international challenges, the need for increased democratization and balanced geographical representation and the need to respect crucial values of collective action and effective multilateralism. In our opinion, the terms of reference for any future Security Council reform should remain efficiency, adaptability and progress. In our view, those are also the key words accompanying the notion of Security Council reform.

As an elected member of the Security Council with nine months of service behind it, Romania constantly strives to make its own contribution to efforts aimed at the improvement of the Council's working methods, a greater level of transparency and adjustment of the decision-making process. In that regard, the public debate organized by the Romanian

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presidency of the Security Council in July (see S/PV.5007) and its follow-up process, in which our delegation is committed to assist, will help us re-think the relationship between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations, promoting, among other things, the concepts of cooperation and subsidiarity.

Romania supports a robust enlargement of the Security Council, with due attention to preserving the effectiveness of its decision-making and its overall activity. We have on several occasions had the opportunity to elaborate on the specifics of our position on the matter. I will therefore limit myself to restating only that Romania strongly supports the proposal that, as a minimum, one additional elected seat should be afforded the Eastern European regional group.

Last but not least, we feel that any decision on Security Council reform should enjoy consensus, or at least the broadest support possible, within the United Nations membership.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to participate in the joint debate on agenda items 11 and 53, on the report of the Security Council and on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and current President of the Security Council, for his comprehensive presentation of the report of the Council (A/59/2). The report is clear and highly descriptive in nature. We have therefore noted it, and we have no specific comments to make on it at the present time. Our intervention focuses on Security Council reform, since it is our view that reform of the Council is pivotal to the continued relevance of this Organization.

It is possible that some may ask why a small State like Barbados has an interest in this issue, since they may see Security Council reform as a matter of concern for the big States of the international community. We believe, however, that every Member of the United Nations, no matter how large or small, has a stake and an interest in the reform of the Council, for the most meaningful way to ensure international peace and security is for there to be a collective response to global challenges and crises.

As recently as last year, the international community witnessed the deadlock in the Security Council over the issue of Iraq and the eventual decision of a group of States to pursue a partisan approach despite the deadlock. That, in our view, threatens the important principle of collective security, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and it also threatens the Council's legitimacy. Such an important organ of the United Nations, we believe, should be reformed to enable it to serve as an effective and legitimate instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. This means, in our view, that it must have the capability to reduce or contain threats to international peace and security.

As a member of the Organization with a commitment to multilateral diplomacy, we believe that the time has come for the United Nations to make some tough decisions on reform of the Security Council. Although it can be rightly argued that the performance of the Council in recent years has raised questions about its legitimacy and effectiveness, we believe it can become an important instrument for peace if its shortcomings are addressed.

It is in this spirit that Barbados maintains that the Security Council must be made more representative of today's membership of the United Nations, as well as more transparent in its working methods and more democratic in its decision-making. We therefore call for the expansion of the Security Council membership in both its permanent and non-permanent categories. It has been said that representation is a key factor in helping to determine the legitimacy of the Council. That is why we go further, to suggest that representatives from the main regions of the world, including Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, should be considered for inclusion in the permanent category of Security Council membership and a fair representation of the developing world in its non-permanent category. Such changes, we believe, would make the membership of the Council more representative of the modern world.

In respect of the working methods of the Council, we believe that the use of the veto should be re-examined. If the veto cannot be eliminated, then its use should be significantly curtailed, and guidelines should be drawn up for that purpose. In a world where the ideals of good governance are being emphasized, the continued use of this undemocratic device should

not be allowed to frustrate the broader will of the Members of the Organization.

This intervention is intended to represent our initial views on this key aspect of reform of the Security Council. We stand ready to participate actively in the Open-ended Working Group to continue discussions and negotiations, with a view to arriving at solutions that would be acceptable to all.

While it is disappointing that discussions in the Group to date have not led to any agreement on the issues, the Barbados delegation would nevertheless like to thank the Chairman of the Working Group for his efforts in leading the work of the Group over the past year.

We would like also to express the hope that the Working Group will be able to find a way to achieve consensus on this very important matter in the very near future.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, President of the Security Council for this month, for his comprehensive presentation of the Council's report to the General Assembly. My delegation also commends the excellent work done by the Secretariat in compiling this highly informative report.

The reform of the Security Council — that very important body of the United Nations — is vital to the Organization and should be carried out in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter. Albania's views on the issue of Council reform have been voiced here by many other countries. We believe that such reform should address the need to strengthen and increase the efficiency of the Security Council. It should take into consideration the changes that have occurred on the international scene.

The expansion of the Security Council remains one of the key aspects of that body's reform. It is an important component of a broader reform that will enable the Council to play a major role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Albania supports a reform of the Security Council that will facilitate broad participation on the part of the States Members of the Organization. We believe that such reform will enshrine both a wider geographical dimension and a more democratic spirit. We share the opinion that the outcome of the reform must be the product of a broad consensus on the part of the international community. In that regard, we think that we all should work together to take decisions that are based on the broadest possible consensus.

Albania is of the opinion that the much-needed reform of the Council should aim at rendering the Council more representative, democratic, reliable and effective, with democratically elected new members — a Council that is accountable to the States Members of the Organization.

The expansion of the Council should not overshadow other issues of equal importance to genuine and effective reform. In addition to the composition of the Security Council, the reform should tackle a broad spectrum of issues. The Albanian Government holds the view that further progress should be made in the area of the working methods of the Council, as there has already been a positive impact on its transparency. We believe also that the initiatives that have already been taken to ensure greater involvement on the part of the United Nations membership in the Council's deliberations should be strengthened and broadened.

Albania welcomes the trend demonstrated throughout the past year towards a stronger partnership between the Security Council and regional organizations. We encourage a more dynamic dialogue in the Security Council on this matter.

Mr. Grigore (Republic of Moldova): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for this month, Ambassador Emir Jones Parry of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for presenting the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

Our appreciation goes to the Secretariat for an informative, analytical and concise report, and we commend the fact that the structure of, and approach to, the report used in recent years has been maintained.

During the past 12 months, the Security Council addressed an extensive number of issues. In discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council tackled difficult situations in various parts of the globe: Iraq, the Middle East, Afghanistan and other hot spots, mainly in Africa, but also on other continents.

The fight against terrorism continued to be a major theme for the Council's consideration, and new and old challenges and threats were added to the Council's agenda: the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, peacekeeping and cooperation with regional organizations, post-conflict reconciliation and justice in conflict and post-conflict societies.

I would like to touch upon several issues of particular significance to the Republic of Moldova.

The recent adoption of Security Council resolution 1566 (2004), which is aimed at strengthening international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, and the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) Executive Directorate (CTED) demonstrates the Council's continuing resolve to combat this scourge in all its forms and manifestations. The Republic of Moldova strongly supports the CTC's activities and backs the relevant efforts made at the regional and subregional levels aimed at the full and timely implementation of resolution 1373 (2001).

Secondly, by its resolution 1540 (2004), the Council for the first time addressed the problem of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and imposed far-reaching obligations on Member States. Preventing terrorists and other non-State actors from acquiring, developing, or transporting weapons of mass destruction will significantly reduce the threat posed to international peace and security. The Republic of Moldova is committed to the full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and is currently undertaking a number of actions at the national level to this end.

Thirdly, I would like to commend the Council's determination in responding to crises and outbreaks of hostilities, as well as its flexibility in authorizing, during the year, four peacekeeping operations — in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Haiti. The surge in peacekeeping operations required additional troops and resources, and many countries, including my own, accordingly responded to the Council's request. The Republic of Moldova is currently participating with personnel in two of those missions and is preparing an additional peacekeeping contingent.

We commend the continuing trend towards greater transparency in the Council's work and note with appreciation the increasing openness of the Council. The regular open debates held on a large number of issues are very important to that end, increasing the possibility for non-members to express their views on major problems on the international agenda.

One of the most recent debates, on the rule of law and transnational justice in conflict and post-conflict societies, has been focused on adherence to the rule of law in States facing or emerging from conflicts. We would like to highlight, among the issues addressed during this debate, the problem of the existence of lawless areas in the world. While international organizations are improving and developing new capabilities and methods of handling difficult conflict and post-conflict situations, in territories without recognized authorities, including separatist entities — as is the case in the Transdniestria region of the Republic of Moldova — illegal and criminal activities flourish that often undermine the security and stability of entire regions. The international community, the United Nations, especially the Security Council, should find a way to support the restoration of the rule of law in lawless areas, in accordance with international norms and standards.

The Republic of Moldova fully supports the efforts to reform the United Nations system with the aim of enhancing its leading role in international affairs, reinforcing its capacity to address new threats and challenges, and ensuring a stronger and more effective Organization — a goal shared by the vast majority of its Member States.

The central part of this process must be the reform of the Security Council. The composition of the Security Council must mirror the changes that have taken place in the international context since it was established. Regrettably, the activities of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, the body tasked with the Council's reform, have yielded no results after 10 years of deliberations. In this regard, the Republic of Moldova, like other Member States, looks forward to concrete recommendations from the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change on how to advance this process.

The President took the Chair.

Too often, the Security Council has been accused of failure in discharging its main responsibilities. It is essential, therefore, to make it more efficient, a task

that can be achieved, in our view, by improving its representativeness, legitimacy, transparency and accountability.

The Republic of Moldova pronounces itself in favour of a moderate enlargement of the Council's composition and of a reasonable increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members that would correspond to the principle of fair geographical distribution and would ensure an adequate balance between industrialized and developing States. At the same time, we would like to reiterate our position that the expansion of the category of non-permanent members should necessarily include the creation of an additional seat for the Group of Eastern European States, the number of whose members has more than doubled during the past decade.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that what is really needed at this stage is political will on the part of Member States to continue the efforts to attain general agreement on the issues involved, starting with those proposals for which there seems to be wide support. In our view, these include the following: the expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership, including both developing and developed countries in the expanded permanent membership; reforms in the decision-making process; and the need for periodic review. We express our hope that during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Member States will succeed in resolving the pending issues and will achieve tangible results.

Mr. Kamanzi (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to take this opportunity, Sir, to convey to you, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly and on the excellent way in which you have been facilitating the discussions in this session. I am loath to let slip this opportunity to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Julian Hunte, on a very fruitful presidency of the fifty-eighth session, particularly with regard to agenda item 53, which is now before us for discussion.

The inclusion on the agenda of the item regarding reform of the Security Council was timely. Reform of the Security Council has become unavoidable, as most speakers stated during the general debate at this session. I do not need to recall that the new challenges and threats facing our ever-changing world are such that we must question our traditional approaches to the resolution of our complex problems of peace and security and adjust our approach as needed.

More than ever before, the world needs a Security Council that is representative, active, transparent and, most important, conciliatory, acting on behalf of — and in the interest of — all nations without exception. A representative Security Council means a Council in which all the continents of the world have a meaningful voice. It is thus crucial that Africa and Latin America should now be given permanent seats on the Council. We can no longer leave countries by the wayside; nor can the views of some members carry more weight than those of their counterparts.

We therefore believe that the number of Security Council members should not only be increased in the non-permanent category, but also — and most important — in the permanent category. The new permanent members should enjoy the same rights as the five current permanent members. The new permanent members should, as far as possible, come from the group of nations that have performed with distinction with regard to their commitment to the process of conflict-resolution and in support of global peacekeeping endeavours at the regional and international levels. These would also include nations that have been outstanding in their commitment to the promotion of the economic and security interests of the most disadvantaged countries.

By an active Council, we mean a Council that will remain focused — on an ongoing and non-discriminatory basis — on problems of security and fundamental human rights. By an active Council, we mean one whose functioning would not run the risk of being paralysed by unconstructive, undesirable differences among the members of a reformed Council. From an active Council, we would expect unfailing momentum in the decision-making process. We would expect realistic — but also speedy —decisions, not calculating decisions, particularly when human lives are under imminent threat.

I hope I am not mistaken when I reaffirm that we all agree that the Council should act and take decisions on behalf of the entire United Nations family: we do not believe that the Council takes its decisions on behalf of the 15 current members. In that regard, we believe that some decisions should require the contribution of States not members of the Council,

particularly those in a position to better analyse the issues before the Council.

Obviously, it is even more important that the countries directly concerned in the matters before the Council be informed and consulted at every stage in the consideration of those matters. It is essential that they have an opportunity to provide clarifications on elements that to date the Council has often tended to analyse on the basis of information from sometimes limited and biased sources. Have we not seen situations in which a country involved in an issue on the Council's agenda has only been informally informed of this thanks to the kindness of certain members — or has not been informed at all? What would the nations of the world stand to gain by counting on a decision-making body with such esoteric methods of work?

The proactive Council to which the international community aspires is a Council that properly uses existing information about latent crises in certain parts of the world and that can anticipate the explosion of such crises and the complexity of their consequences. A reinvented Council should ensure that it is able to mobilize the resources necessary for it to act in a functional and preventive manner.

We also think that a reformed Council should place greater stress on conciliation by maximizing efforts to find common ground among the parties to a dispute. Would it not be better to help them eliminate the source of their dispute than to keep the crisis in a state of latent hostility, a situation that is not very helpful to either party?

Those points summarize our contribution to the remoulding of the image of the Council for the future. We are convinced that the nations of the world have every means at their disposal to shape that image. We must try hard to take advantage of this opportunity to take a decisive step forward. Future generations will be proud of us if — and only if — we can bequeath to them an effective body that will help to spare them the vicissitudes that our generation has unfortunately not been able to avoid. If we are sure that that is what we want to do, we can do it.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry, President of the Security Council, for his comprehensive presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly. We must note that the Council has accomplished work whose volume, intensity and political scope grow each year.

Bulgaria welcomes the positive trends in the Security Council's working methods. As a Council member in 2002 and 2003, Bulgaria worked ceaselessly to improve the transparency of its deliberations. The report attests to the increased number of public meetings, particularly on important issues on the Council's agenda, giving all Member States an opportunity to participate. Steps have been taken in the right direction with regard to harmonizing the work of the Council with that of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council. Periodic consultations among the Presidents of those organs have now become a regular practice. Through the Arria formula, an effort has been made to more thoroughly consult representatives of civil society through non-governmental organizations. In that area, however, much remains to be done.

Bulgaria is satisfied with the level of cooperation — and in some cases even partnership — that has been established with regional organizations. The Council's debates with the participation of representatives of such organizations have proved to be particularly productive. As a border country of the western Balkans and Chair-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Bulgaria is participating actively in the Security Council's cooperation with the European Union, NATO and the OSCE in Kosovo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other regions of common interest. My country attaches major importance to such cooperation.

Questions related to the equitable representation of United Nations Member States in the Security Council and to an increase Council membership are directly linked to the international community's efforts to find better institutional responses to present-day challenges to world peace and security. That is an essential element of overall reform of the United Nations, to which Bulgaria is deeply attached.

The head of the Bulgarian delegation for the fifty-ninth session, Minister for Foreign Affairs Solomon Passy, has declared from this rostrum my country's unfailing support for improving the effectiveness of the principal organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council (see A/59/PV.8). Bulgaria fully shares the common will of

all Member States to successfully carry out United Nations reform as quickly as possible — a wish expressed in the Millennium Declaration. Reforming the United Nations while taking today's realities into account is the best way to strengthen and consolidate multilateralism as the fundamental organizing principle of international relations.

My country has always favoured updating the way in which Member States are represented in the Security Council. Bulgaria supports increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent members in order to improve the Council's representativity and its democratic functioning. Since the membership of the Group of Eastern European States has nearly doubled since the end of the cold war, we should think about an extra non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the countries of that Group.

Bulgaria awaits with interest the outcome of the work of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change appointed by the Secretary-General. We hope that the Panel's report will be a solid basis for the membership of the United Nations to continue its work on reforming the Organization and the Security Council with greater awareness of problems and of their possible solutions.

Mr. Vengesa (Zimbabwe): We have listened to the views of the delegations that have taken the floor before us. Throughout those statements, we noted a commonality of interests regarding the absolute necessity of reforming the Security Council. However, beyond that common view, differences abound with regard to detail.

I have taken the floor on this item to reiterate what my delegation said last year and in the years before that. What is perhaps striking is that colleagues who have taken the floor before me have also repeated their same old positions, with which we have all become too familiar. The question we need to ask ourselves is whether we want to have this item on our agenda ad infinitum. I think that the time has come to conclude discussion of this topic.

The continued failure to find progress on the issue of Security Council reform is no longer acceptable to my delegation. It is certainly not acceptable to the world outside this Hall. This is the eleventh year since the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other Matters related to the Security Council. Eleven years later, we have encountered gridlock on the path we have travelled, and there is no positive end in sight. As I have said before, the debate on Security Council reform has been too drawn out. We think the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly is an auspicious occasion on which to achieve a breakthrough on this matter.

A truly democratic and representative United Nations should be at the centre of international governance. It is therefore critical that, in reforming the Security Council, consideration be given to creating an organ that reflects today's international realities. My delegation wishes to warn against the creation of a disequilibrium in the Council — an unequal situation that Foreign Minister Mudenge has described as akin to the presence in one kraal of both steers and bulls. Yes, we need to move with speed to reform the Security Council, but we also need to proceed with caution.

We agree with countries that, like South Africa, have identified the Assembly as the only democratic and genuinely representative universal organ of the United Nations, uniquely positioned to achieve consensus on this and other important issues. Any attempts to circumvent the Assembly will have the opposite and unintended effect of alienating the majority of the United Nations membership as well as compromising the integrity and credibility of the Organization.

Finally, Zimbabwe supports expanding the Security Council at both the permanent and the non-permanent levels. We are willing to further engage Member States from our region and beyond on how that can be done.

Ms. Holguín (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, current President of the Security Council, for presenting the report of that organ (A/59/2) to the General Assembly. We welcome the fact that this item is again being considered jointly with the item on reform and expansion of the Security Council, because in our view the two items are intimately linked.

We appreciate the work of the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council. We appreciate the efforts they have made in recent years to make their work more efficient and transparent to the international

community. However, it is enough to read the report of the Council to understand that it is basically just a compendium of the matters that have been examined, the activities undertaken and the resolutions adopted. The brief analytical summary that has been included for the past three years provides barely enough information about progress, regression or trends in the conflicts addressed on the Council's agenda.

We are concerned about the evolution of the thematic debates in the Council. That evolution may create a very worrisome precedent. Certain situations may be incorporated into the Council's agenda as the result of a thematic resolution. Thematic resolutions may be applied to other situations that are not part of the Council's agenda. These resolutions may be well intentioned, but they are occasionally misdirected, as the result of applications going beyond the norms of international humanitarian law, and may end up not contributing to solving conflicts or truly protecting the victims of violence.

The clarity, objectivity and transparency with which the Secretariat works on topics is indispensable for the Council's decisions. Coordination and consultation with countries when preparing reports, as well as equal treatment for all States, are fundamental. We cannot have first- and second-class countries. We must also all equally have precise information regarding the work done on different topics by different parts of the Secretariat.

There is consensus on the urgent need to reform the methods of work and increase the number of members on the Security Council. The consensus arises as the result of a lack of true accountability towards the body in which we are all represented, since no substantive information is provided to the General Assembly. The Security Council is also not a democratic organ, since there is a veto, nor is it representative, in as much as there is a regional imbalance that does not favour the developing world. It is also not efficient because it does not concentrate on its real agenda, which is conflict resolution. We all agree that we need a Security Council that is more representative of the international community as a whole and reflects the geopolitical realities of today's world.

For Colombia, the issues of reform, methods of work and the veto are all interconnected. They must be resolved as a package. We have historically objected to the veto, but, if it cannot be eliminated, at least it should be restricted to Chapter VII action in cases of threats to the peace, breaches of the peace or acts of aggression, as set forth in the Charter. As for expanding the membership, we believe that expansion of the permanent membership does not seem to be supported by Member States. However, we could expand membership in the non-permanent category in line with the principles of equitable geographical distribution and sovereign equality. We would like to help build a consensus concerning the non-permanent member category that will provide equitable representation for all regions, in particular developing countries. We believe that the procedures to select candidates on a geographical basis should be based on fully legal rules and enjoy political legitimacy, thus guaranteeing equal opportunity with regard to the new seats and avoiding any discrimination between developed and developing countries.

Efforts to reform the Council must take into account the fact that internal conflicts make up almost the entire agenda of the Council, while its area of competence is to resolve conflicts that threaten international peace and security. Many of the failures of the Council are due to its configuration created just after the Second World War, when it had to deal with international conflicts. That shortcoming is evidenced in a lack of understanding of the realities that it has to contend with. Depending entirely on the reports of the Secretariat, at times it has deliberated on situations without even hearing from the State involved. The State is invited only to a formal meeting to listen to a decision that has already been taken on the conflict and the future of that State. Colombia considers it fundamental that any State that is involved in a situation must be present at all informal closed consultations of the Council at which that situation is to be analysed and defined for its agenda. The United Nations must work with States to strengthen the rule of law and institutions.

I would like to finish by saying that Security Council reform must be part of overall reform of the United Nations aimed at strengthening the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, so as to regain the ground that has been lost to the Security Council. The Assembly should once again become the pre-eminent organ of the Organization, and the Economic and Social Council should be able to

effectively contend with social and economic challenges before they turn into armed disputes.

It is in that context that Colombia appreciates and supports the efforts made by the United Nations and its Secretary-General to restore the lost consensus on the manner in which to guarantee international peace and security. We expect a great deal from the report in December of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We will analyse its proposals with the sense of responsibility that is incumbent upon us as a Member State committed to multilateralism, as well as a country that particularly suffers as a result of global problems such as terrorism and illicit drugs.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): There is no doubt that the role of the Security Council as enshrined in the United Nations Charter is paramount in that it has the primary duty and responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It should be noted that, while other organs of the United Nations make recommendations to Governments, the Council alone has the power to take decisions which Member States are obligated to carry out. It is in this regard that the Council's work should be transparent, democratic and accountable to the larger membership of the General Assembly in order for it to be effective and its decisions appreciated and respected.

My delegation wishes to acknowledge with great appreciation the achievements of the Security Council in the execution of its duties. It has carried out many peace initiatives that have resulted in the peaceful resolution of various conflicts around the world. Through its peacekeeping missions, in which Zambia is proud to continue to participate, many countries which were at war have succeeded in re-establishing peace and are in transition to rebuilding their countries. The African continent has had its fair share of these conflicts and I wish to commend the role played by the Security Council and the African Union in helping to resolve those issues.

The report of the Security Council has provided insight into the issues that have taken centre stage in Africa. The Council has effectively responded to crises and outbreaks of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and the Sudan in the Darfur region. In the West African sub-region there has been significant progress in peace-building efforts and in some countries, like Sierra Leone and Liberia, post-conflict peace is becoming consolidated. Those are positive developments that Zambia, through the African Union, has supported and welcomed.

In view of the importance attached to the role of the Security Council, the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session adopted resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, in which it established the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. That issue has been on the Assembly's agenda for over a decade without any conclusive resolution. For that reason, my delegation stands ready to continue participating in the reform process of this serious and complex matter to ensure success and progress on it.

It is worth noting that at its inception the United Nations had 51 members, while the Security Council had 11. Since then the membership of the Organization has increased to 191, but that of the Security Council to only 15. My delegation, therefore, shares the views of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union and other Members in calling for an increase in Security Council membership, especially among developing countries, to reflect current realities. In that context, it is my delegation's view that the expansion of the Council should be in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

My delegation further wishes to emphasize that the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council should be one of mutual respect, enhanced by increased transparency and improved working methods. Regrettably, my delegation has observed that the Council has been gradually encroaching on the powers and the mandate of the Assembly and other organs by involving itself in such matters as gender equality, poverty eradication, children in armed conflict, rule of law and human rights, which traditionally fall within the competence of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. That encroachment has to be avoided in order to enhance specialization and reduce overlap on issues.

The veto exercised by permanent members of the Security Council was created for Chapter VII issues and its purpose was to promote collective interests. That objective, however, seems to have been ignored by the Council's permanent members. The veto power has regrettably been abused and has become discriminatory and undemocratic; its continued use has

eroded the principles of transparency and accountability in the Council's working methods and procedures. Indeed, it has created two categories of membership in the Council, despite the principle of sovereign equality set out in Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Charter.

It is important that the veto be used for the benefit of all Member States of the United Nations; on too many occasions it has served only to protect national interests. In some cases, certain members have utilized the veto only on issues that they considered as endangering their own perception of threats to world peace.

In that regard, my delegation concurs with the proposals made by some members of the Open-ended Working Group that the permanent members exercise responsibility and accountability in the use of the veto or, indeed, abolish it altogether. Furthermore, they should particularly refrain from using the veto on resolutions authorizing the use of force or imposing sanctions. In addition, permanent members should not use the veto when a decision has been supported by the majority of Council members, and its use should be limited only to Chapter VII issues. Zambia also concurs with a proposal that it should be possible to overrule a veto with a two-thirds majority vote in the General Assembly, under the "uniting for peace" formula set out in General Assembly resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950.

In conclusion, Zambia wishes to appeal to the Assembly to support the proposal of the Open-ended Working Group in its efforts to enhance the decision-making and liaison methods of the Security Council. It is my delegation's considered view that once Council reforms are undertaken, that important United Nations organ will be democratic, effective, transparent and accountable. Those tenets will underpin the multilateral approach to the ever-changing threats to world peace. It is with that in mind that my delegation looks forward to the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change as it will provide a platform on which the United Nations can construct its responses to the current and future threats that face the whole world.

Mr. Kau (Fiji): Fiji supports the reform of the Security Council. We also subscribe to the belief that the time for reform is now and that due attention and focus must be given to it to ensure its success. We certainly run the risk of rendering this body insignificant and outdated should we fail to act in a timely manner.

The latest report of the Security Council recorded a hectic and intense past 12 months, with issues covered by the Council becoming more complex and wide ranging. If the report is anything to go by, the Council is being challenged to the point where a reform of its structure and systems, including its membership, is necessary to ensure an effective and truly multilateral Council based on the rule of law, democracy and equity.

While discussions on the proposed reform have been limited to a few key areas, namely, the expansion of membership, its structure and its working methods, Fiji is of the view that the reform of the Council must be undertaken in a comprehensive manner in the context of the reform and revitalization of the United Nations. After almost 60 years in existence, the United Nations must continue to be in tune with the modern world in order to better serve its Charter.

The decision-making process of the Council must as much as possible reflect the new world order. To that end, Fiji supports the expansion and strengthening of the Security Council, both in its permanent and non-permanent membership. Fiji's Prime Minister, The Honourable Laisenia Qarase, addressing the general debate in September, called for the inclusion of countries such as Japan, India, South Africa and Brazil as permanent members in an enlarged Council. He argued that their inclusion would ensure a balanced Council where the voices of all, including smaller developing nations, are heard. Representation on the Security Council will only be truly democratic when equity and justice are enshrined as guiding principles.

Fiji also supports the review of the veto power of the permanent members, with a view to ensuring that those powers are used to contribute positively to the Council's role in preventive diplomacy and not as an unnecessary impediment to it.

Fiji supports efforts to improve the reaction time of the United Nations and the Security Council to peacekeeping calls. The issue has been the subject of continuous debate and the suggestions for improvement have been many, with the most prominent being the enhancement of the triangular relationship between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries. The enhancement

of that relationship will go a long way to strengthening the multilateral role of the United Nations, in particular, the Security Council, in the areas of peacekeeping and peacemaking.

Furthermore, Fiji is also of the view that effective response to peacekeeping calls can be better addressed by the Council through the establishment of standby facilities and personnel. In so doing, the Security Council will be strengthened by a reduction in its deployment time and the potential to pre-empt situations in which calls for the United Nations to take preventive measures are prevalent. The Council's performance in peacekeeping is to a great extent measured by its capacity to mount effective and timely peacekeeping operations.

Reforms are not easy to undertake, particularly in a multilateral institution with almost universal membership which is based on the concept of the sovereign equality of States. The deep divergences of views and opinions on the best approach for tackling the challenges confronting the world and the international community are added burdens to the process.

We therefore look to the outcome of the report of the High-level Panel established by the Secretary-General to provide some practical and pragmatic solutions. We also hope that the diversity of membership of the Panel will ensure a varied and balanced assessment, with positive recommendations that will take the United Nations closer to the achievement of those important milestones. Fiji stands ready to be engaged in the deliberations on the report.

Sir, Fiji looks to your guidance and competent leadership to take us forward in this time of reform, following closely from where your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the fifty-eighth session, left off.

An important challenge is before us, and the time has come when the collective will and cooperation of all Member States will be important and success will be measured by how much progress we achieve during the fifty-ninth session.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who in his capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of October introduced the annual report on the activities of that body at the beginning of the joint debate.

Although there is an obvious link between the two items on our agenda, we feel that the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) is sufficiently important to be considered on its own. Needless to say, it forms one of the chief connections between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Article 15 of the Charter provides for the General Assembly to receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council. That involves more than a merely symbolic or ritual act. It constitutes one of the fundamental connections between the two organs and, above all, a tool allowing the Assembly to fulfil its role as the main organ of the United Nations in the areas of deliberation, adoption of policies and representation of the Member States of the United Nations.

We are pleased to note in the report before us a feature we welcomed in last year's report, namely, that it is a further step in the right direction, inasmuch as progress has been made with regard to its size and contents. Some of those present here will recall prior reports that did not at all comply with the explicit intent of the Charter provision cited above. Although admittedly the present report does not fully meet our expectations, at least it fulfils the minimum requirement of keeping the Assembly informed of the extensive programme of activities of the Council during the reporting period.

We also welcome the fact that the work of the Council has gained somewhat in transparency, due to various factors. In particular, the idea that the elected members of the Council represent the membership as a whole has now been institutionalized more than ever before. We are grateful in that connection to the delegations of Brazil, Chile and Mexico for having kept the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean informed of activities in the Council. We extend our thanks in that connection to the Non-Aligned Movement caucus.

There is also the fact that the ever more frequent practice of holding public meetings has contributed to the greater involvement of all States in the work of the Council, by at least providing them with an opportunity to express their views on issues considered relevant by the Council — despite the fact that it may be doubtful

whether the external points of view exert any appreciable influence on the decisions finally taken.

Further, there is also the perception that even the permanent members have been more receptive than in the past to criticism addressed to them concerning the closed nature of the work of the Council. The frequent statements by the presidency of the Council, when countries are occupying the Council's attention, bear witness to that.

That said, we can not but recognize that the relationship between the organs of the United Nations, in particular between the Security Council and the General Assembly, still leaves much to be desired. It could be contended that the concentration of prescriptive power on issues of the greatest importance in that 15 member body, dominated as it is by the five permanent members, has thus far been at the expense of the authority of the General Assembly. That does not necessarily have to be so, since as the Charter provides that the various organs, each with its own composition and particular powers, should support each other reciprocally. Nevertheless, experience has shown — and we have repeatedly expressed our regret here in this forum — that, as the Security Council gains ascendancy, the General Assembly loses it.

That being so, the report of the Security Council implicitly reminds us that two crucial tasks are still pending. I refer to the ongoing reform of the working methods of the General Assembly and to the long-delayed reform of the composition of the Security Council.

Concerning the first point, we could widen the reform agenda and comment on the United Nations system of governance, which no doubt requires some updating. That is part of the equation whose virtual absence from our deliberations we regret, inasmuch as, in the last analysis, the unsatisfactory relationship between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council is a challenge that sooner or later we shall have to face seriously.

Concerning the second point, convinced as we are of the need for the Security Council to be more representative, transparent and efficient, we advocate an increase in the number of its members. Our position has been evolving so that we can now agree that the increase should apply to both categories of permanent and non-permanent members, with regard to the need for adequate geographical representation.

Finally, may I express the hope that, pending the conclusion of the reform of our main organs, we shall be able at least to strengthen the few links that exist between them. In that regard, we hope that the recommendations of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will contain measures that contribute to the discussions and strengthen the halting steps taken over the past two years in response to the challenge.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Sir, for presiding over this debate, which has been lengthy and extremely fruitful and positive. I hope that under your leadership we will be able to draw the best possible conclusions for the future of our Organization.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to congratulate the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the current President of the Security Council, on his highly appreciated introduction to the Assembly of the annual report of the Security Council, which is before us now for our consideration following unanimous approval by the members of the Council.

The discussion on the future composition of the Security Council and its activities is another opportunity for us to further develop our common thinking about ways and means to accelerate the reform of that crucial body within the United Nations system, to allow it to meet the challenges that pose a threat to international peace and security.

Our shared goal of reforming the Security Council cannot be met by means of a mere cosmetic improvement in its working methods. That goal, rather, requires a profound rethinking of the architecture of that principal organ of the United Nations system in order to make it more representative and to assure its credibility and legitimacy.

The need to adapt the Security Council, which was created in response to the issues of the Second World War, is obvious, particularly since the end of the cold war and the approaches that characterized that period. Certainly, at the time of the adoption of the Charter there were considerations that led to the creation of permanent members and to granting them the veto power. As we all know, that was an exceptional historical context, which cannot serve as a model that can be reproduced or extrapolated from. On the other hand, while taking into account the profound

upheavals that have occurred in international affairs, we must not worsen imbalances or freeze development. That is the essential issue that we have to address when we discuss the composition of the Security Council: while it is difficult to abandon certain aspects of the heritage of the past, should we try to reform that legacy by worsening some of the anachronisms it has left us, or, would it not perhaps be better to put it to one side and try to reduce its effects by, first of all, focusing on the non-permanent category of members, looking both at their number and at the duration of their mandates, which can be altered.

Of course, we also understand the legitimate aspirations of certain great nations to participate on a permanent basis in the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. That is where the heritage of history comes into play. We should certainly not try and worsen its effects, exacerbate divisions or, worse still, freeze the effects of history.

The Kingdom of Morocco is an old country, familiar with the vicissitudes of history. We therefore feel that any revision of the Charter to change the composition of the Council must take into account both the heritage of the past and the need to give the Charter all the flexibility necessary to adapt to future developments. It is in much the same way that one recognizes good legislators and good jurists: they are able to resolve the problems of the present while allowing room for adaptation in the future. In other words, the Kingdom of Morocco believes that realism and wisdom indicate that the international community, in its consideration of the composition of the Security Council, should focus on geographical and cultural factors by, in due course, adjusting the duration of the terms of office of non-permanent members.

However, there is no point in changing the composition of the Security Council if at the same time the international community does not address the issue of the Security Council's ability and capacity to react to new threats, such as international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It will certainly be necessary to take another look at the Council's capacities with respect to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to addressing serious threats to international peace and security, given that the Council's job is not to formulate generalized and abstract rules — which is normally the province of the General Assembly — but, rather, to respond to specific crises and other situations. It is certain that we cannot merely address the issue of institutional reforms without looking at the normative side. We cannot change the composition and functioning of bodies without considering the question of their capabilities.

Turning to the issue of the pacific settlement of disputes pursuant to Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, the functions of the Security Council and of the Secretary-General must complement each other in order to bring parties together to achieve the desired political solutions. In order for that process to work, all parties must accept the decisions that are taken and must cooperate fully with the special representatives appointed by the Secretary-General to implement those decisions.

On the other hand, the United Nations, obviously, does not stop at the Security Council. Even when discussing the Council, we need to remember that while considering the Organization's role in the maintenance of peace and security, the developing countries believe that its other function should also be revitalized: the promotion of development. There are two sides to the United Nations: the maintenance of peace; and development. One cannot function without the other. In our view, it would be useful to clearly indicate the relationship between the restoration of peace and the consolidation of that peace through economic and social activities. The relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions needs to be deepened, so that once a given crisis has been resolved it cannot suddenly be rekindled because of the system's inability to build a real peace.

In that regard, we hope that the basic functions of the Economic and Social Council — regulating and coordinating multilateral Government action in the economic area — will be clarified and specified in order to mitigate the globalization of market forces.

Finally, the General Assembly should, as it is doing today, be able to debate the activities of smaller bodies and thus subject them to the scrutiny of the entire international community. As the most universal body, the General Assembly has the legitimacy to undertake that task.

In conclusion, we eagerly await the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We are convinced that they will be of help to us all and will trigger the reform we

want to accomplish. We hope that that new impetus will be realized when we commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the joint debate on agenda items 11 and 53, on the report of the Security Council and on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. A total of 106 speakers took the floor during the six meetings devoted to consideration of those two items. This demonstrates the importance that Member States attach to the question of Security Council reform.

With respect to agenda item 11, "Report of the Security Council", I recall that, under paragraph 12 of the annex to resolution 51/241, the President of the General Assembly is called on, inter alia, to assess the debate on this item and to consider the need for further consideration of the report of the Security Council.

During the debate, many speakers welcomed the report's inclusion of an analytical segment on the work of the Council, in response to the expectation voiced by Member States. However, those States had called for the analytical segment to be more thorough so that they might identify progress, difficulties and potential solutions considered by the Council in its programme of work.

Some speakers stressed the considerable amount of work carried out by the Council in the period under consideration, in particular concerning hotbeds of tension in Africa and elsewhere.

A great many speakers expressed concern over the current trend in the Council of organizing thematic debates on topics falling under the competence of other principal organ and of legislating in areas that impinge on the General Assembly's purview. They emphasized the need to restore the balance of competencies between the Assembly and the Council and advocated a greater degree of cooperation between the two organs.

Several speakers welcomed the Council's efforts to act in a more transparent manner. They welcomed initiatives to better inform Member States, in particular through information meetings, and called for those efforts to be stepped up.

Speakers took note of the visits the Council undertook to the field in order to better assess situations that affect International peace and security and require urgent action on its part. Others felt, however, that in the course of its visits, the Council should seek to compile a broader range of information. They noted that the visits should take place early enough to determine the underlying causes of crises and to prevent any deterioration thereof.

Some speakers called for the Council to involve the Member States directly concerned by matters under consideration in its consultations so that it can take fully informed decisions.

They were also concerned to note that, during the period covered by the report, matters of equal importance were not given equal attention, creating the impression of selectivity on the part of the Council.

There was a broad consensus on the need to strengthen cooperation between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In that connection, as President of the General Assembly, I am pleased that many delegations expressed their satisfaction at seeing the Presidents of the Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council holding working meetings, pursuant to resolution 58/316.

Moreover, several speakers called for a strengthening of cooperation between the Council and regional organizations in order to increase the capacities of the latter in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Many speakers underlined the need for the Council to hold a greater number of public meetings in order to allow Member States to express their opinions on matters before it. They called for a greater degree of participation by non-members of the Council in informal plenary consultations, particularly when the Council considers matters of direct concern to them.

Turning to agenda item 53, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", I wish to stress the fact that the debate on this item was taken up in the context of the general debate and of the consideration of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform and of the forthcoming report of the High-level Panel appointed by the Secretary-General to consider United Nations reform.

Speakers took the opportunity to congratulate my predecessor, Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, President of the

General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, and the two co-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, Ambassadors Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein, on their excellent work.

Several points emerged from the debate. First, a broad consensus exists on the following four positions. The General Assembly is attached to the idea of Security Council reform, which must be undertaken with determination and alacrity before the sixtieth session, in the light of the work of the High-level Panel, so as to adapt the Council to the realities of the twenty-first century. Reform must address the Council's composition, methods of work and relations with the General Assembly and other bodies. There is a need to expand the Council's composition so as to make it more representative and thereby to strengthen the legitimacy and authority of its decisions. For example, speakers noted that the ratio of representation of Member States on the Council had fallen from 21.56 per cent in 1945 — 51 Members, with 11 Council members — when the Organization was created, to 7.85 per cent — 191 Members, with 15 Council members — today. Some Member States indicated that a future, expanded Council should have 24 or even 25 members. The Council's expansion should enable better representation for developing countries.

Secondly, some speakers spoke in favour of increasing only the number of non-permanent members. A majority of speakers, however, spoke in favour of increasing membership in both categories, permanent and non-permanent.

Thirdly, speakers offered a variety of views on the status, prerogatives and powers of possible new permanent members, in particular as regards the right of veto and the distribution of seats.

With respect to the right of veto, some speakers felt that future permanent members should be fully endowed with that right, like the current permanent members. Others felt that the veto should not be granted because it is anti-democratic, anachronistic and discriminatory and would further complicate the Council's functioning. Others still felt that the veto should be eliminated entirely or have its usage regulated by being limited, for instance, to Chapter VII issues.

With respect to the distribution of potential new permanent seats, some speakers specifically mentioned Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, Brazil, India and an African State as future permanent members. Others stressed that permanent seats should be given not to States, but to regions or groups that would be responsible for designing their own means of designating countries that would be eligible immediately upon the amendment of Article 23 of the Charter.

Furthermore, some speakers felt that the expansion of the Council should take equitable geographic distribution into consideration and reflect the expectations of the countries of Africa, pursuant to the recommendations of the Harare summit, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Eastern Europe and the Arab Group. Speakers also noted that Council reform should be part of broader United Nations reform.

Bearing in mind the observations and proposals made during the debate, I intend to undertake expanded consultations with all the Member States as soon as possible.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council in document A/59/2?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus completed this stage of its consideration of items 11 and 53.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.